



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

COORDINATOR OF FISHERIES
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The giant king crab of Alaska, which before the war was the source of much of the canned crab meat sold to this country by Japan, will be canned by two American firms this summer, according to reports to Harold L. Ickes, Coordinator of Fisheries.

Last summer an American firm, located at Port Wakefield on Raspberry Straits, made a small pack of king crabs and this year hopes to get into commercial production. Another firm will pack the crabs in a factory located on Cook Inlet, Kachemak Bay.

Before the war Japan was supplying about 95 percent of the canned crabmeat sold in the United States. In a single year we imported 10,720,000 pounds of crabmeat valued at \$4,582,000 from Japan.

Following many reports of Japanese fishing in the Bering Sea and in waters near the Aleutians, President Roosevelt requested the Fish and Wildlife Service to investigate king crab resources in the area and Congress provided a special appropriation for the purpose. The investigations were completed shortly before the war began and present crab-canning activities are the result of the report of the investigators. Appropriately, some of the first American pack of king crabs went to the White House kitchens.

The king crab is huge when compared to the familiar blue crab of the U. S. East coast and the dungeness crab of the West coast. The largest specimen found by the Fish and Wildlife Service investigators weighed 22 pounds and, with legs out-stretched, measured 50 inches across. The average male large enough for canning weighs about five pounds. The crabs yield from 20 to 35 percent of their live weight in meat and, depending on size, from six to 22 crabs are enough to fill a case of 48 half pound cans.

For several years before the war Japan had been extending her fisheries in the North Pacific and had conducted much more extensive investigations of the fishery resources of the area than had the United States. Having no nearby land bases, the Japanese did their crabmeat canning on factory ships which had been developed under government subsidy. The sea not only produces the most important protein element in the Japanese diet but before the war marine products constituted that nation's second most valuable export, being surpassed only by silk.